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Immortality and the  
Modern Mind





## Ingersoll Lectures on Immortality

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- DIONYSOS AND IMMORTALITY: The Greek Faith in Immortality as affected by the rise of Individualism. By Benjamin Ide Wheeler. 1898.
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The Ingersoll Lecture, 1922

# Immortality and the Modern Mind

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## THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

*Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1893*

*First.* In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture.

The above sum to be safely invested and three fourths of the annual interest thereof to be paid to the lecturer for his services and the remaining fourth to be expended in the publishment and gratuitous distribution of the lecture, a copy of which is always to be furnished by the lecturer for such purpose. The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."



ὅς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλῃ τὴν  
ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν σῶσαι  
ἀπολέσει αὐτήν.

MARK viii. 35.



## IMMORTALITY AND THE MODERN MIND

**H**AD the Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality been in existence in the eighteenth century there would probably have been, in the New England world which found its centre in Harvard College, but few to question the importance of the subject or to doubt the right approach to it. Men of true piety and sound learning unhesitatingly held that the authoritative revelation of Scripture justified the expectation that after death they would retain or recover all the characteristics of their individual lives. But by the end of the nineteenth century when the Lecture was founded a rapid change had set in. Men were no longer convinced that the writers of Scripture knew more about a future life

than they did themselves. Historical criticism began to suggest that writers who were far from infallible in their descriptions of the past were not wholly to be trusted in their prognostications of the future. The change, however, was made quietly. When confronted with the problem in the pulpit or in the lecture-room speakers passed bravely but silently on.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Society for Psychical Research began to study the matter from the point of view of objective evidence for the survival of life after death. One of the by-products, as it were, of their activities was a questionnaire sent out in the closing years of the nineteenth century by Dr. Richard Hodgson and the

<sup>1</sup> The arguments for and against a belief in Immortality did not answer each other. The opponents of the traditional belief relied on physical, the supporters of it on metaphysical considerations. In an age of physical progress the former held a natural advantage.

American branch of the Society. This questionnaire was an attempt to collect information as to the general attitude of educated persons towards belief in Immortality. The answers were extremely interesting and are discussed at length by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller in a paper read to the general meeting of the Society on November 14, 1902, forming part 49, pp. 416-453 of the Proceedings of the Society.

I do not propose to discuss the details of the questionnaire and the answers given to it. These show that the majority of those consulted were not deeply interested in the continuance of existence, and that far more than might have been supposed actually welcomed the gospel of Eternal Death as more comforting than the threat of Eternal Life. I desire merely to set forth the reasons which lead so many reluctantly to decline a prospect dear to our fore-

fathers and attractive to ourselves, and secondly to describe a new attitude towards life which seems to be taking its place. I wish to show how this attitude plays the same part in modern life as the quest for individual Immortality did in a former age, and how it can be combined with a philosophy which revives some features of the mysticism which hopes for Eternal Life rather than for Everlasting Living, though the practical "way" which it enjoins is almost the reverse of all that has usually been associated with such mysticism in the past, especially in the East.

It might be held that the abandonment of the traditional hope and the lack of interest in Immortality shown in the answers to the questionnaire of the Society for Psychical Research are due to a change of thought on the previous question whether life is worth living.



Whether, had we been consulted, we should have been willing to face the troubles of life or have preferred to remain non-existent, is a query which would probably be answered in different ways by different persons. The doubt which hangs over the value of life extends also to the value of its continuance; it may fairly be supposed that some of those who in answering Mr. Schiller's questionnaire rejected as undesirable the prospect of Immortality would also, had they been asked, have declared life a poor thing, full of weariness, and not worth the trouble of living, and there are probably many who, without regarding existence with such marked dislike as consistently to wish for its close, nevertheless accept it with an indifferent tolerance, living from necessity rather than from choice. Nevertheless this is scarcely a normal view, and its occurrence is not a sufficient explanation. Many of those

who expressed themselves as uninterested in the question of Immortality were by no means tired or dissatisfied, and their attitude must be otherwise explained. For myself, though I can perhaps understand the reasons which lead to a depreciation of life, I cannot yield to them. Though I have suffered some disabilities and a few misfortunes, life has always seemed to me intensely interesting, certainly amusing, possibly useful, and the longer I live, the more I like it. I should enjoy nothing better than to take part in a successful return to Methuselah and to be able to contemplate with a certain smiling seriousness the development of events which now seem destined to be still far from their fruition when my period of observation comes to an end.

Those who still cling to the traditional hope for the continuance of life in its present form, or something like it, are

wont to describe the object of this hope as the 'Survival of Personality,' but Personality is a difficult word, and as I wish to use it presently in a somewhat different sense, I will say rather 'the Survival of Individuality.' What is the nature of this 'Individuality'? It is essentially the boundary line between us and the world which we see and love. It separates the worker from his task, father from son, friend from friend. It is the bars between which we can peep — with some difficulty — and behind which we can hide — though not always safely. The difficulty and the danger make up much of the pleasure — as distinct from the happiness — of life. For unquestionably the game of hide and seek is pleasant and amusing, and much of our intercourse is little more. It depends wholly on the interplay of individualities, on distinction and difference, on conversation rather than comprehension,

on contact but not union. It is idle to suggest that it does not take with it some element of pleasure. I have no sympathy and little patience with those who deny the reality of material, physical and social enjoyment of all kinds; and material, physical and social enjoyment, of whatever sort, is dependent on individuality. We are ourselves, we wish to be ourselves; to give free rein to our own individuality and to help others to do the same to theirs is one of the joys of life.

This pleasure is indeed so normal that those who do not share in it must be regarded as lacking one of the essential elements of vigorous health. To project it on to our anticipation of the future is most natural, and as soon as man's imagination once enabled him to construct visions of a possible triumph over death nothing was ever dearer to human hope than the expectation of a future life

which would retain all the features of individual existence, — sensation and memory, the society of friends and the joy of living. It is not because our generation enjoys life less, but because we understand it better, that so many turn their gaze away from the alluring picture of the continuance of existence as we know it now. For that better understanding has brought with it the conviction that the continuance of sensation is impossible without physical structure, and that the survival of physical structure is extremely improbable.

The hope of physical continuance has been father to two thoughts which have been curiously united in the history of ideas, — the belief in the Resurrection of the Body, and the belief in the Immortality of the Soul.

The phrase the Resurrection of the Body means that at some period after death life will return to the corpse, which

will, so far as is necessary, be reconstituted from the elements into which it has been dissolved. The doctrine was derived through Pharisaic Judaism from Persian thought and was held firmly and even passionately by Orthodox Christianity. It is expressly stated in the Apostles' Creed. Some obscurity has attached itself to this fact because the word which means 'flesh' was translated in the English Prayer Book by 'body,' and the word 'body' has proved to yield more readily to that form of 'reinterpretation' which entails proving that a word can be legitimately used to express the exact opposite of the meaning originally intended; but it cannot be doubted by any who know enough Latin to translate *carnis* or Greek to render *σαρκός*.

In Greek pagan circles the doctrine of a Resurrection of the Flesh was not found, but its place was taken by a belief

in the Immortality of the Soul. This is essentially the belief that the body is a mechanism kept in action by some internal motive power other than itself. So long as the motive power is in the body, the body is alive; if it be removed, the body dies. That motive power is the soul, and the individual is the soul rather than the body.

Taken in their original and simple forms the Resurrection of the Flesh and the Immortality of the Soul are quite distinct. The belief in one is obviously independent of the other, and their combination is always rather unhappy; but in the history of Western thought the fact that Christianity combined Greek and Jewish thoughts was stronger than logic. Greek Christians were at first wholly disinclined to listen to the Jewish doctrine but ultimately succumbed to it. The way was paved by Paul who in the first Epistle to the Corinthians joined



the Greeks in rejecting a belief in the Resurrection of the Flesh, but maintained the certainty of a Resurrection from the dead by a body which will be spiritual rather than animal. It is, I think, plain that he means by this a body which will consist of spirit, that is to say the lightest and most ethereal form of matter, but his language is not very clear and some verses, though not all, are capable of being interpreted as meaning a body of flesh which was made alive by the spirit instead of by an ordinary soul, so that it became spiritual instead of animal.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Animal' is a far better rendering of *ψυχικός* than is 'natural.' But Paul's meaning is in any case very difficult to define. What exactly is the difference between 'soul' (*ψυχή*) and 'spirit' (*πνεῦμα*)? Apparently the former is that which makes an animal alive; thus Adam was a 'living soul.' The latter is the principle of divine life, shared in by Christ and Christians. Such at least seems to be the meaning of I Corinthians; but in other places when Paul uses the same words the distinction is less clear.



Nevertheless the Greek belief in the independent Immortality of the Soul did not die. To the first generation death seemed a short sleep from which men would soon be awakened by the last trump. But as time went on and the trumpet still preserved a saecular silence, the period assigned to slumber seemed too long. The old belief — which had never died out — that the soul was immortal and survived the body gained more and more attention. Various fanciful hypotheses were presented which pictured the souls of the dead enjoying the pleasures of Paradise in anticipation of the permanent joys of Heaven, or passing their time amid the flames of Purgatory, where transitory pain might purify the sinner so that he should escape the eternal pangs of Hell. On the resurrection morning the body would be awakened from its long sleep, and would be reunited to the soul with which it would be

doomed to an eternal sentence of bliss or woe.

It was a clear cut system, easy to understand, impossible to refute, and throughout the Dark and Middle Ages it was the foundation of the Church, for the ferocity of those ages was admirably nourished and partially controlled by the thought of an eternally blessed body for the righteous and of the unending writhings in pain of the wicked. In which thought men took the more pleasure would be difficult to decide and unprofitable to discuss.

Protestantism moved away from this theory, but on moral and biblical rather than intellectual grounds. Outraged by the priestly exploitation of purgatory Protestants rejected it altogether and retained only the juncture of soul and body at the last day. What happened to the immortal soul while waiting for its appropriate body was not explained.

Purgatory was abolished, but the Judgment, Heaven, and Hell were retained. It was a choice infinitely clumsy: it left out the only educative element in the mediaeval system, and retained an impossible combination of worn out Persian and Greek mythology.

But in the nineteenth century the current of thought against this crude and horrible doctrine had begun to flow strongly; not merely did men perceive the injustice of any judgment which divided humanity between the two extremes of heaven and hell, but, reviving early gnostic and pagan objections, they began to feel the general absurdity of expecting that the worn out body of the dead would be reassembled from the elements into which it was dissolved, or that new bodies of similar composition would be provided for souls some of which had existed for many centuries without them. In any science other than theology men

would have said that the creeds were wrong on this point, and that they could no longer affirm them, but that was impossible in theology. It is one of the characteristics of the queen of sciences that though the ornaments in which she be decked are constantly changing, her courtiers often think that they must be called by the same names, and the changes be steadfastly denied until some time after they have become notorious. So it was with the belief in the resurrection, and today probably a majority of educated Christians who claim to accept the creeds think that their affirmation of the 'Resurrection of the body' merely means the 'Survival of personal identity.'<sup>1</sup>

Turning from ecclesiastical circles to secular ones the belief in the Resurrection of the Flesh may fairly be regarded as obsolete, and a belief in the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

Survival of life wavers. The essentials of this belief are that after death our flesh ceases to be alive and soon disappears, but we ourselves continue to exist as spirits. It here merges into the belief in the Immortality of the Soul, so that the tendency of modern thought is to reject the Resurrection of the Body, in fact if not in word, and to cling to the Immortality of the Soul. Nevertheless, though we are none of us likely to accept the way in which early Christian writers expressed themselves, there is one essential point on which the early church was right. The theory that the body is a mechanism operated by the soul which is a material entity composed of lighter and more ethereal substance, has nothing to commend it when viewed by the cold gaze of modern science. As I understand it, the majority of physiologists and psychologists agree that in this sense there is no evidence for the existence of

the soul at all. The phenomena of life as we now live it, including the facts of consciousness and the whole complicated process of sensory existence are bound up with the body. The modern scientist and the early Christian are in complete agreement on this point, and there has been a curious and interesting revival and reversal of early arguments. The modern man has affirmed the validity of primitive Christian reasoning as to a Resurrection of the Flesh while denying the final conclusion. He treats as a *reductio ad absurdum* what to the early Christian was a demonstration; but he accepts the intermediate arguments. Thus the difference between them is that the early Christian, postulating a future life, insisted that in that life man must have a body, while the modern scientist, postulating the dissolution of the body, argues that therefore there can be no future life.

Nevertheless there is one class of researchers who, in contrast to all the rest, do claim to produce evidence for the continued existence of a soul, or as they more often call it, spirit, which is independent of the body and survives it. I have always followed their researches more superficially than I ought to have done, and I still remain sceptical. On two points, however, I am convinced. In the first place, it does not seem to me that telepathy, or thought-transference, completely explains all the phenomena. No doubt telepathy is a subject about which we know very little, especially in the Western world. It is possible that its scientific practice might produce results of amazing significance, but I still cannot see that this theory explains the facts or that it is easier to believe that they are due to hitherto unknown possibilities of telepathy than to the survival of a spirit or soul. Secondly, if the spirit



survive death and have the powers and experiences attributed to it, either it is material or has extraordinary power over matter. In either case its presence ought to be provable by material and irrefutable tests. If this were done I should accept the facts as evidence for the continuance of life beyond death in a form which either preserves its material individuality or is capable, under certain circumstances, of reproducing the material form which it once possessed.

Meanwhile probably most hold individual life to cease with death. It is the intellectual conviction that this is so, not any abnormal tendency to depreciate natural pleasure, which has led to a lack of interest in the question of Immortality, at least in the form in which it is usually propounded. Men regard the permanent survival of their individuality much as they look at schemes for



their permanent rejuvenation: a pleasant dream, impossible of fulfilment.

This conclusion is often deplored by those who do not share it. But it has raised rather than lowered the standard of life. The pursuit of individual Immortality consumed a lamentable amount of energy in past generations. To attain salvation was thought to be the object of existence. This life was held to be in the main a preparation for another. Sometimes it was thought of as a wretched period full of temptations and miseries, to be lived through as well as possible, valuable only because success in withstanding temptation and enduring misery would secure eternal happiness. Those who thought most narrowly in this way were considered to be the best. It is not altogether surprising that people who argued in this way contributed little to the improvement of

the world and that those who managed its affairs very rarely had any claim to saintliness of thought or fineness of insight. There were, of course, exceptions, but there was no part of Christian teaching which was so completely minimized as the words of Jesus that he who will seek his 'soul' shall lose it. Men went on year after year thinking of nothing so much as how to save their own souls. Even philanthropy was put on a wrong basis and the charity of the Middle Ages was less often inspired by love of man than by the hope of heaven. In general there was produced a type of selfishness all the more repulsive because it was sanctified.

In place of a quest for Immortality there is today among the most active and virile of our contemporaries a new attitude towards life; for they have almost suddenly ceased thinking about their own Immortality and regard their

work as more important than their own souls. No movement more remarkable than this has affected life in the last hundred and fifty years, and when history comes to be written at a sufficient distance it will probably appear to be the great change of our time, commensurate with the rise of Christianity or with the Renaissance, far more important than wars or revolutions. The object of their work is in their minds the improvement of the world in which our children are to live. It is an unselfish object, and the pursuit of a better world for another generation to inherit has become the surrogate for the hope of a better world above for ourselves to enjoy.<sup>1</sup>

If I see the facts of modern life rightly the best men of today are not engaged in any strenuous effort to shuffle economic or political cards, but so to understand and educate instincts, and to control the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II

circumstances of life that they may permanently improve the conditions of the battle which man upon the earth must fight against disease, ignorance, and toil. To do this is the goal which they have set before them, and is to them what the pursuit of Immortality was to their fathers. If they succeed they will produce a world for their children to inhabit which will be better than that in which they have lived themselves. They themselves will never enter the Land of Promise, but it is sufficient for them to have seen it afar off. Their life has come to mean less to them than their work. It may be true that philosophically speaking most of them are materialists and the Christian preacher is often shocked at their plainly stated disregard for all questions concerning a future life. Nevertheless there is no type of man at present living who so completely sacrifices himself for the good of others or

cares so little about saving his own life. They are not seeking the crown, but many of them are bearing the cross, and though seeking the crown has been the practice of the Christian, bearing the cross was the precept of the Christ.

Therefore, even if the conclusion that individual life ceased with death were new I should not be afraid of it, judged by its effect on men. But it is not new except in the Western world; for in the East the permanent survival of individuality has long been regarded by many as undesirable, and improbable except in the form of retributive reincarnations. There, indeed, the longing to escape the confinement of individuality is as marked as the desire to retain it is common in the West. It does not, however, mean a desire for or a belief in the destruction of Life. Nirvana is not annihilation, it is the release of Life from the limitations of living.

The Oriental saint seeks this goal by attempting to set life free by the renunciation of all desire or even of all action.<sup>1</sup> The tendency of modern life just discussed seems to afford both a parallel and a contrast to this Eastern mysticism, for, as Bernard Shaw once pointed out, many of the great scientists and business men of today are not so much sceptics as mystics. Though perhaps few of them would express the facts in quite this way they have reached a belief in the Immortality of Life which does not entail the perpetuation of individuality, — so far the position is parallel to Eastern thought. But it affords a contrast in that they find the way of life by identification with the work of the world, not by seeking release from it. Such men are

<sup>1</sup> This is only true of certain sects, some of which renounce action, others merely abandon desire, but the popular cults, such as that of Krishna, offer the immortal salvation of the individual.

conscious of an extension of life beyond the limits of individuality, and without, like the Eastern mystics, underestimating the pleasures or exaggerating the pains of individuality, set over against them the conviction that individuality is the limitation rather than the expression of life; that it is the barriers which confine personality, not the form which it must inevitably take and that these barriers are sometimes lifted. This feeling, for it is a feeling or an experience rather than a logical thought, is reached in several ways.

There is the way of the worker who has so engrossed himself in his work that he has become part of it, can stand outside his own individuality, realize its mistakes and shortcomings, appreciate the contribution made by others to the same work and feel that in the unity of the work the barriers of individuality are lifted and the personality of the many



workers is one. Yet to him who has this experience life is enriched not impoverished; he has not lost a home but gained rather freedom from a prison. The barriers close down once more and with their closing the sense of unity grows dim, the perception that the imperfections of many workers complement each other for the perfection of the whole gives place once more to the insistent yet dissatisfying emphasis on the necessity of one's own work and the superiority of one's own truth. Yet though the barriers close, the memory that they were once open remains, and individuality can never again seem quite the infinitely important thing it once was.

Closely allied to this is the way of the artist. Indeed, I am not sure that it is not really the same way, but I mean rather the way of the artist who enjoys art than of him who produces it. For the contemplation of beautiful things



whether by eye or by ear results in that same raising of the barriers and in a curious recognition of the unity of life. It was Wordsworth who at times was so overcome by this feeling that he had as it were to remind himself by some sudden appeal to the senses of his actual individuality. He had lost himself in the contemplation of beauty. Had he, or had he found himself?

On a higher level, yet perhaps more common, is one of the rarer experiences of friendship. As we go on our way through the world we make an infinite number of acquaintances to whom we show and of whom we see as much as it suits us both to permit. There are others to whom we would gladly show more, of whom we would gladly see more, yet we cannot. It is beyond our power to lift the barriers. Intercourse with such persons is strictly limited by the possibilities of speech. But there are others, not

very many, with whom it suddenly seems as though the barriers were raised and the discovery is made that in spite of outward appearances there is a real unity on which the two can rest. Such moments of discovery have nothing to do with length of acquaintance, age, or sex, and possibly they do not come at all to everyone, nor do they always remain, but they are never forgotten.

The highest point in this experience is reached by the religious mystic. He has always felt that the goal of existence was a union with God so complete that it transcended the limits of individuality and the mystic and God were completely unified. To such a mystic individuality was something to be overcome, not to be retained, yet to overcome it was no loss, — his personality was not the same as his individuality. To him, if he happened to be a Christian, the doctrine of the Trinity, the one God in three Persons, was

the ultimate reality of which all life is but a pale reflection. In the Divine Being personality was free and unhampered by the limits of that individuality which confines human personality. How it could be so, how diversity and unity could each be complete and neither infringe on the other, was a mystery which the mystic could understand as little as other men. Yet he avoided the heresy which leaves no room for reality in diverseness or the other more orthodox heresy, if one may so call it, which treats personality as individuality and reduces the doctrine of the Trinity to a weakened tritheism, for his own experience, though it could not explain, helped to illuminate the doctrine. Not often, it may be, yet sometimes in the course of contemplation and meditation the barriers have been lifted and the mystic has found himself for a few moments in that world of reality, beyond good and evil, in which

the 'one' and the 'other' find unity without loss, where God and man know that they are one, and man discovers that what he has lost, if it be called loss, is not himself, and that here, too, the saying is true that he who will lose his life shall find it.

This experience of 'lifted barriers' is never permanent. As with the worker, so with the artist, as with the mystic so with the friend, the barriers are only lifted at times. For all our desire to keep them open they close inexorably when the time has come and the limitations of individuality reassert themselves. But though the way be often closed, the lock has a key and those among the children of men are perhaps most blessed who have that key and use it. To open the lock and lift the barrier is Heaven; to find that one has allowed the key to rust or the lock to become clogged is Hell. With the imperfect na-

ture which most men have, no doubt the key often rusts and the lock is often clogged, but not irretrievably, and if to enjoy Heaven sometimes it is necessary to be in Hell at others, the price is not too great.

This is my own creed. Like many other creeds it may be held without any conscious relation to metaphysical theory. Nevertheless relation to metaphysical theory is, I think, clearly implied. It excludes materialists and their kinsmen, nominalists, but is easy of understanding to those who cling with tenacity to a belief in the Immaterial and in the permanence of Life, as distinct from the process of living. It is with this class that I myself feel increasing sympathy, for with advancing years one of the things which become clearer amid so much that grows more obscure is the difference between Life and Living. I can see no reason for believing in a soul

of however ethereal a substance which keeps the body alive and will ultimately leave it, but I do see that there is reason for believing as firmly in the reality of the Immaterial as in that of the Material. I have never felt obliged to stake my intellectual all on a decision between *universalia post rem, ante rem* or even *in re*, but that the Immaterial is real is the one thing which to me is fundamental. My senses assure me of the Material, my mind of the Immaterial. Thought and Life, but not Living and Thinking, seem to me to belong wholly to the immaterial world. Living and Thinking are the junction of the Material and the Immaterial. I can conceive, though I cannot imagine, Life without Living, or Thought without Thinking, for the Immaterial is conceivable though quite unimaginable, so that it cannot be visualized; and though there be many who, like myself, cannot avoid visualizing every thought, how-

ever abstract, reason tells us to disregard that visualization as an error due to the personal equation in our system.

One of the essentials in the Immaterial, as I believe all philosophers who have thought along these lines have recognized, is that in it Unity and Diversity are, to borrow theological language, co-eternal and consubstantial together. Once more, this is conceivable though not imaginable; but it affords the answer to one of the riddles of life. For if we say that Personality is immaterial while Individuality is the combination of the Material and the Immaterial, it is possible to see how it is rational to reject the Immortality of the individual, who is the combination of Material and Immaterial, while accepting the eternity of the person who is immaterial. The words are bad for popular use, for in common speech 'personal' and 'individual' have come to mean the same thing; but I



know no other phrases which are better, and the theologian at least has no difficulty in recognizing that one chapter of the history of doctrine is the attempt to use the word 'person' to express the reality of distinction in the Immaterial alongside of the most complete unity. In that sense a personal God and personal Immortality are conceivable though not imaginable; in other senses, to me at least, they are imaginable but not conceivable.

That is my own *confessio fidei*. I enjoy my own existence, I enjoy all of it, its bad, I fear, as well as its good. But I am not so much intoxicated by the love of my own individuality as to think that it can be or ought to be immortal. If I am my own individuality and nothing else there is no more to say. But at times I have felt the assurance that I and my friends share in a common life which is ours, rather than mine or



theirs. Greatly though I enjoy the life which is mine, I prize yet more highly that which is ours. The sense of individuality is swallowed up in unity; yet the sense of distinction survives the loss of difference. I think that I know that the work which I have to do is life and that it is mine, in spite of the limitations of an individuality which hampers and thwarts quite as often as it helps and forwards, and that it will still be mine, when the barrier of those limitations is removed. And at times I have thought that I have seen a glimpse of the great light of eternity transfiguring the mountains of time, and have known that when it shall finally lighten the darkness which now separates us, I and my friends and my work will find in it forever the unity which resolves difference yet preserves distinction.

## APPENDIX I

THE ABANDONMENT IN THE CHURCH  
OF THE BELIEF IN THE RESUR-  
RECTION OF THE FLESH

THE way in which this change was brought about in England is very interesting and may serve as an illustration of a process which has been almost universal in Protestantism.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, opinion in England maintained the same position as Catholic theologians. They held uncompromisingly to the opinion demanded by the Apostles' Creed, and affirmed the Resurrection of the Flesh. The first theologian who abandoned this attitude was perhaps F. D. Maurice, but the natural obscurity of his style renders it hard to say exactly what he meant, and Bishop

Westcott is really the author of the great change. He entirely abandoned belief in the Resurrection of the Flesh as formulated in the Creed; but he never said so. On the contrary he used all his matchless powers of shading language, so that the change from white to black appeared inevitable, natural, indeed scarcely perceptible. He writes, for instance, in *The Historic Faith*, page 136, as follows: "*I believe in the resurrection of the flesh.* But in shaping for ourselves this belief we need to use more than common care lest we allow gross, earthly thoughts to intrude into a realm where they have no place. The 'flesh' of which we speak as destined to a resurrection is not that material substance which we can see and handle, measured by properties of sense."

Thus he explained that when the Creed spoke of the Resurrection of the Body it did not mean the Resurrection

of the Flesh (though both in the Greek and Latin originals it said so), but that it was affirming the Survival of Personal Identity. No doubt it was; but it was affirming that this personal identity was maintained in a special manner, and it was this point which the bishop entirely passed by.

The same position was maintained by Bishop Gore. He writes, for instance, in *The Creed of the Christian*, page 92, as follows: "*We believe for certain in the resurrection of the body. This does not mean that the particles of our former bodies, which were laid in the grave and which have decayed and passed into all sorts and forms of natural life, will be collected together again; but it means that we in our same selves shall be re-clothed in a spiritual body which we shall recognise as our own unchanged selves.*"

A more complete denial of the Creed

cannot be imagined, and the situation is not improved by the fact that Bishop Gore, unlike Bishop Westcott, did not shrink from quoting the erroneous English translation, — ‘body’ instead of ‘flesh,’ — though he knew, even if most of his readers did not, what the original Greek really was.

It speaks much for the power which these two bishops had over the English language that they were successful in imposing the change on the English Church with scarcely a struggle. To historians it was obvious, of course, that the Creed had been denied, though by way of paraphrase rather than by contradiction, but it was not so stated, and when in 1922, Mr. Major, the Principal of Ripon Hall in Oxford, put the case frankly he was delated to his bishop as a heretic. He did not, however, follow the policy of Bishops Westcott and Gore, but admitted that though the Church

had on the whole always maintained the Resurrection of the Flesh, the Church had been wrong.<sup>1</sup> He claimed that it was a proper use of liberty to explain the Creed in such a way as to affirm the contrary of its original meaning, and to "interpret" the Resurrection of the Body as meaning the continuance of personal life without "any of the physical integuments of this present body." He won his case. But the reasons given by the Bishop of Oxford in acquitting him are remarkable. Mr. Major said, "I desire to state as plainly as possible that I do not hold, nor do I make any pretence in my teaching to hold, that belief in the mode of the resurrection of the dead which

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Major has published a most admirable statement of his case, including a catena of quotations from the Fathers of the Church to establish the Catholic position. See *A Resurrection of Relics*, by H. D. A. Major, published by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1922, price two shillings.

has been held by the Catholic Church for eighteen centuries."

The bishop's comment is: "I do not find that Mr. Major denies the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body: in fact, he positively asserts his belief in 'the full survival of all that constitutes whatever is essential to human personality; in short, all that is meant by personal identity.'

"I notice the extreme candour and almost exaggerated emphasis with which Mr. Major declares that he cannot reconcile his teaching 'with the Catholic tradition,' inasmuch as he believes that the Catholic tradition is not compatible with the teaching of Scripture. I believe he is mistaken, and his mistake is due to the limited view he takes of Catholic tradition."

So it was decided that Mr. Major was orthodox *malgré lui*. It is a very important incident, for it is the first official

recognition in England that if the Apostles' Creed should appear to be wrong, it can still be affirmed by making it mean the opposite of that which its writer intended. I have myself sometimes wondered whether it would not be simpler to say that the Creed is wrong and to cease affirming it, but the result reached is much the same, for very often in life, as in chess, Bishops move obliquely.



## APPENDIX II

## THE QUEST FOR A BETTER WORLD

It may not be out of place to summarize the two ways in which this quest for a better world seems to be most successfully pursued.

The first is the necessary attempt to conquer the cross-strains and pressure of personal life. It is becoming plainer and plainer that the life of the natural man is made up of a number of instincts many of which cannot be fully satisfied without incurring the severest social condemnation. Previous generations contented themselves with suppression, a policy which, if completely successful, does more than anything else to destroy all energy and produce either feeble mediocrity or nervous instability. The Victorian epoch insisted on dividing instincts into good and bad, categories

for which instincts were never intended, but our generation is learning that they are almost wholly physiological reactions on man's psychology. Therefore what is needed is not suppression but transmutation, or, to use the word which has become popular, sublimation. Viewed from this point education has become a different thing. To the development of the mind, and the acquisition of fundamental information it has added the training of instinct. We are at present passing through a period of transition and some teachers are making the mistake of thinking that the training and utilization of instinct is a substitute for the intelligent acquisition of knowledge. But experience may be trusted to bring wisdom, and meanwhile there is some hope that a new and happier era has dawned in which the superabundant natural instinct of naughty children, troublesome under-

graduates, and youthful criminals will be treated in some more reasonable way than ranking them with defectives and degenerates, so that the excess of energy, of which their misdeeds are the measure, may be transmuted into good. It may be said that children outgrow their naughtiness. That is true; but I believe that in the past many children who had outgrown their naughtiness also outgrew their intelligence. Some children, of course, cannot be suppressed, but others can, and there are few sadder sights than the dull, virtuous, respectable and thoroughly useless person who bears on every feature the signs of suppressed childhood. The problem is not how to suppress but how to direct into useful channels the energy which misdeeds often represent.

If this be called the conquest of instinct the second object which men set before themselves today is the conquest

of circumstances. The greatest discovery of our own time, so great that it will take another generation to see its importance, is that man has it in his power to control material circumstances in this world so as to make existence an altogether better and more valuable thing than it has ever been before. It is no exaggeration to say that if as much devotion and energy, and only half as much money, as was devoted in the days of war to the preparation of death were transmuted to the preservation of life it would be possible in the course of a single generation to stamp out many diseases, to improve the general conditions of existence, and to do one other thing which would go far toward giving civilization, for the first time in history, a stable basis.

This other thing is the diminution of unintelligent 'toil.' Of course 'work' cannot be abolished, nor do I mean that

'work' is undesirable or unpleasant. But there is a real difference between 'toil' and 'work,' which enters, I think, in relation to the freedom of the creative will. Man — the right kind of man — will work himself to the bone in order to create, by himself or in co-operation with others, that which he has foreseen and willed. He will be happy and contented in doing so. But if the conditions of society deprive him of this power of free will, and he become merely an instrument in the hand of others, his work is merely 'toil' and the better educated and more intelligent he is the less he can endure it.

Up till the present, the price of civilization has been the unremitting 'toil' of the greater part of the population. Whether they were slaves or whether they were wage-earners has made no real difference, and re-shuffling the economic cards only changed appearances;

the fact has remained unchanged that if there was to be civilization the majority of the population had to spend its life in unpleasant and frequently quite unwilling labours. Again and again civilization has been built up on this basis, only to fall in ruins when the toilers refused to toil. To many of us it seems probable that the spread of education added to factory production will hasten rather than delay a similar *débâcle* in our generation, for the education of factory workers makes their condition more obvious and more intolerable every day. But, though curiously little noticed by the general public a new factor has been introduced in the form of devices, of which I understand few and could properly describe none, which tend to take the burden off the human worker and pass it over to our common mother, the earth. If the benefits to be derived from these meth-

ods can be adequately explained and equitably divided they will form a 'new fact' in the history of civilization which may prevent the recurrence of the periodic ruin which has always come when men revolted against the burden of toil. Moreover, I think that I see dimly that there is an inspiring number of leaders in the manufacturing world of today who are reforming the conditions of life on this principle. Even to those who cannot understand the details the general outline of their efforts is entrancingly interesting, and especially to teachers. For education, by making men more intolerant of 'toil,' is hastening the day of disaster; yet, on the other hand, by making them more intelligent it is rendering possible a reformation of society and a really stable civilization. It is indeed "a two handed engine at the door"; which way is it going to strike?

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